

*With the compliments of the author*

A

**HISTORY**

OF THE

NEW-YORK

KAPPA LAMBDA CONSPIRACY.

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Tempus omnia revelat.

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## ADVERTISEMENT.

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THE following Essays from the "MEDICAL EXAMINER," a department of the New-York Weekly Whig, are republished connectedly in compliance with earnest solicitations.

We present them to the public with the assurance that we have stated nothing in point of fact which we cannot prove; we have insinuated nothing which is not justified by the strongest circumstantial evidence; and we have drawn no inference, which does not appear to us, to be clearly deducible from the premises.

New-York, January, 1839.

T U 23 JUN '55

# HISTORY OF THE KAPPA LAMBDA CONSPIRACY.

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## I.

### THE MEDICAL SOCIETY OF NEW-YORK, AND THE KAPPA LAMBDA CONSPIRACY.

IN general we have little sympathy for men *out* of office clamoring against those who are *in*. Too frequently the contention is merely between such as *have* "the spoils," and such as *want* them—a battle of the lank and hungry against the fatted calves. But there are occasions of a very different character; on which opposition becomes a paramount duty, a manifestation of virtuous indignation against usurpation and abuse; a contest between the spirit of freedom, and the all-grasping, merit-crushing spirit of monopoly. Such an occasion is about to present itself at the annual meeting of the New-York Medical Society.

A club has for near twenty years existed in this city, called the KAPPA LAMBDA. Secret, dark, impalpable; its existence, like that of the blighting miasma, being known only by its effects. Without record visible to any but the initiated, it holds its assemblies where no eye can see, no ear can hear, and no foot intrude, but such as are of the sworn and secret brotherhood, and concerning its existence and its proceedings, on the lips of its members reigns the silence of the grave.

Such societies we abjure, condemn, scorn; they are the clanships of paltry minds, for paltry purposes, and are powerful only for evil. Justice, truth, science, are of the day; they court investigation; no ends do they strive to attain which cannot be compassed by open and honorable means. But the selfish, the revengeful, the robber and the traitor, seek the cave and the den. They are of darkness, night must enshroud them; bars and bolts must protect them from the world's gaze, and they must be protected from mutual perfidy, by oaths and affirmations, by pledges of secrecy and brotherhood.

For twelve years was this midnight clan unknown to the other members of the profession, and during that time it so juggled the cards, as to get nearly all the honors into its own hands, and it has managed to retain them. This usurpation of meanness and mediocrity, rendered talent and high-mindedness criminal. Many, in whom these qualities combined, have been crushed; many who could not be crushed have been crippled, and none have been left unharmed who would not cringe.

Here is the explanation of the contemptible predicament in which the medical profession of this city is placed. In a community, famous the world over for energy, enterprise, and talent; in a city first in population, first in wealth, first in position, we have a medical college almost contemptible, and an hospital wherein more blunders have been committed, than would have damned half the medical reputations of the country.

On the second Monday of July next, a nomination ticket will be offered to the Medical Society, headed by the names of

DR. J. W. FRANCIS, for President, and

DR. J. STEARNS, for Vice-President.

None of the candidates on which, are members of the secret club, but all zealous supporters of the following declaration of principles passed on the 26th of March last.

#### MEDICAL SOCIETY OF THE CITY AND COUNTY OF NEW YORK.

“Resolved, That the members of this Society, believing that the honors and emoluments of the profession should be the *rewards of merit*, not its *criteria*; and recognising in the justice and importance of open competition, a vital element of the policy which should govern the liberal institutions of a republic—hereby pledge themselves individually and collectively, to advance, support, and maintain, on all suitable occasions, the principle of FREE COMPETITION *in the honorable exercise of professional talent wherever exhibited, whether striving in the walks of private enterprise, or contending for the palm of public distinction.*”\*

We call upon every independent medical gentleman in the city to give this ticket his zealous support.

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#### II.

#### TO THOSE WHOM IT MAY CONCERN.

If one evil exists, is it more wise and noble to destroy that evil, or to counterbalance it by another of equal magnitude? *Do two wrongs make one*

\* See Appendix Nos. 2, 3 and 4.



*right?* Again: if a set of men conspire clandestinely to secure to themselves unfair advantages, and another set of men are loud in denunciation of the act, is it consistent or becoming that the denouncers themselves should unite for like purposes, and plead *precedent* in justification? In short, because we have KAPPA LAMBDA THE FIRST, must we also have KAPPA LAMBDA THE SECOND?

"Felix quem faciunt aliena pericula cautum."

### III.

## ON THE LATE ELECTION OF MEDICAL OFFICERS.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE EVENING STAR:

Sir,—In your paper of Tuesday last, July 10th, we find the following editorial article:—

MEDICAL SOCIETY.—Yesterday was the anniversary meeting of the Medical Society of New-York. It was the largest meeting ever held in this city. There appeared to be considerable interest felt in the result of the election, *in consequence of certain publications in the Weekly Whig*, and a private circular, containing very serious charges against a medical association called the *Kappa Lambda Society*. This association, we are informed, is composed of *some of the most talented and honorable members of the profession, who hold monthly meetings for the purpose of describing medical subjects and cases.* Like all other societies, they do not admit those who are not members to attend their meetings. *This has given offence to those who do not belong to the association.* Hence, *as we are informed, has originated those rude attacks upon the character and objects of the K. L. association.* We believe, however, *they have never publicly noticed the propagators of those charges against them.* They have relied with confidence upon the good sense of the community; believing that all who know them would not place the *least confidence in the assertions of their calumniators.*

*The question yesterday was fairly presented for the consideration of the Medical Society of this city. The whole ticket headed by Dr. Francis U. Johnston—a member of the K. L. Society—for President, was triumphantly elected, at the largest meeting ever held in New-York. This we should consider a decisive verdict in favor of the honorable character of the K. L. association.*

In the above article you have assumed the championship of the SECRET CLUB known as the *New-York Kappa Lambda*. Not content with this, you have brought a charge of grave import against its opponents. It becomes us, as one of the parties implicated, to prove the fallacy of your charge, and to expose the ignorance of facts, and the flimsiness of reasoning on which that charge is founded.

You say, "It was the largest meeting [of the Medical Society] ever held in this city. There appeared to be considerable interest felt in the result of the election, *in consequence of certain publications in the Weekly Whig*, and a private circular, containing very serious charges against a medical association called the *Kappa Lambda Society*." And at the end of the paragraph you speak of these serious charges as "*assertions*," and of the assertors as "*calumniators*."

We shall not presume, sir, to take up arms for the writers of the "private circular." A circular issuing from a meeting, at which *A. Sidney Doane, M. D.*, presided, and signed by him in compliance with a vote of the meeting of which he was chairman, needs no defence from us. We shall merely do battle in our own right.

It is true, that our charges were heavy, but we intended that they should be so. We did not make a random attack, for evanescent effect merely. We made charges of *serious import*, upon *good and sufficient grounds*, with a *full knowledge* of the circumstances, in words that *were measured*; and, as the event proved, with an effect which will not soon be forgotten.

On the present occasion, we shall confine ourselves to the last paragraph of your article, in which you state—*firstly*, "That the question was fairly presented for the consideration of the Medical Society of this city." *Secondly*, "That the whole ticket, headed by Dr. Francis U. Johnston, a member of the K. L. Society, was *triumphantly* elected," and *thirdly*, that you consider this "*a decisive verdict* in favor of the *honorable character* of the K. L. Society."

In the first place, then, let us inquire *what* question was fairly presented. When we wrote the article to which you refer, the question stood thus. *Shall the advocates of free competition, or the members and dependents of the Kappa Lambda be appointed officers of the Medical Society?* But before the election, it assumed a very different form.

For seven years has there been a contest between the advocates of free and open competition, and the secret club, the members of which had, by twelve years' clandestine management, got nearly all the honors of the profession into their own hands. With these honors and the power which they bestowed; with perfect concord of action, able to concentrate their force to any point, at any moment, no wonder that they were generally an overmatch for men who had no common bond of union, and no properly concerted mode of action. To openly form an opposition society, should have been the first care of their opponents. But no one thought himself bound to dare the hostility of men whom he believed ready to oppose him with foul and unmanly weapons. Year after year passed, the clan became more and more oppressive; the chain of the oppressed more and more galling—and the



chance of any but a member or partisan of the Kappa Lambda ever attaining any of the honors of the profession, at length dwindled to the remotest possibility.

Driven to extremes yet knowing not whither to turn, feeling the necessity of union, yet fearing to unite, at length a number determined, if we are correctly informed, on the unfortunate expedient of uniting *secretly*, to put down the *secret* club.

The article of ours to which you refer, was to the Kappa Lambda like the ring of a tocsin. They foresaw the danger and bent all their energies to meet it. Caucusses were held, at which it was determined that none but the highest offices should be filled by members of the Kappa Lambda, that they would thus gain all the aid they could by gratifying others with their support. So far did they carry this, as to put on their ticket the name of one gentleman, at least, the son of the late venerable Hosack, not only *without his consent*, but *without his knowledge*. Nay, so fearful were they of defeat, that the nomination of *Francis U. Johnston* was objected to as impolitic. The late president was not to be re-nominated, they might need his *casting* vote. A number of their young attachés were called upon to join the Medical Society, which they did, a few days before the election, the notes of some being taken for the initiation fees. They were thus prepared with their utmost strength. Yet would have been defeated after all, but for one circumstance.

Unfortunately for the opposition ticket, but fortunately, perhaps, for the success of free principles, a knowledge of the existence of a new secret society, leaked out just on the eve of election. We received information concerning it from various quarters, and could do no other than notice it. We had taken ground which we felt bound by every principle of honor and honesty to maintain. For us it was to defend the standard of "open and free competition" against both its enemies and its injudicious friends. Hence our leading article of last Saturday. The knowledge of that society was decisive of the election. Many who had roused from long lethargy sunk back. Some who would have voted the liberal ticket remained neutral, and some, who had, up to that week, been warm opponents to the Kappa Lambda, voted its ticket. "The old tiger," said they, "is fat, and has done almost all the mischief it can do; the other is young, lean, and hungry; we will join the old one to destroy the young one before its claws are grown." Such was the course of four of whom we heard, and such the reason they adduced.

After this explanation, let us ask you, sir, *what question* was fairly presented for consideration?

You say that the Kappa Lambda ticket was not only carried, but *triumphantly* carried. This, sir, is the *fact*. Dr. Johnston was elected by a majority of *three*.

But suppose there were no such satisfactory explanation as the above for

the success of the Kappa Lambda ticket, would your inference be correct? Let us try it. You say,

Francis U. Johnston is a *member* of the Kappa Lambda, he *has been elected president* of the Medical Society. THEREFORE,

The Kappa Lambda Society is a *decidedly honorable* association.

Call you that reasoning? Is that the logic by which you try political questions? Let us see.

Medical men, as such, have nothing to do with politicians, but to give them advice on the preservation of health or the cure of disease. But for the sake of trying your logic, let us refer you to your expressed opinion of the present President of the United States, and of the party which elected him, Did you not, sir, before his election, loudly and earnestly oppose him. Did you not storm him and his party with words, fierce and indignant. Yet, sir, he was elected. Did you *then* make a practical application of the above rule of judgment? Did you come out and declare that you were in error, decidedly, lamentably, in the wrong; that you had *calumniated* the president and his supporters, for he had been elected, *therefore* he was honorable, most honorable, and that his supporters were all honorable men? No, sir, you acted more consistently. The burst of indignation was more strong, and the storm of opposition raged more fiercely. You know well, that the acquisition of office is no adequate test of merit. Were electors always actuated by virtue, and guided by reason, it would be so, but alas! *Probitas laudater et alget, et humanum est errare.*

You believe, sir, that one man obtained unrighteously and unmeritedly the highest office in this country; and yet can express such an opinion as you have, concerning the election of the Medical Society!

Suppose thirty men, anywhere, to have the power which office bestows. Suppose their motives to be base and selfish, and their actions mean as their motives are base; suppose them to be adepts at secret detraction, adroit at marshalling hints, and shrugs, and sneers, and at discharging them with such accuracy, as to produce upon an opponent's character any given effect; suppose them to have such influence in the college of the place, as to render it more easy for the *unstudious* and *ignorant* to pass from *their* offices, than for the *hard student* and *well prepared* from the offices of *others*; suppose that they have the power, and employ it, of putting into the Hospital of the place, graduates from their own offices to the exclusion of all others; and after thus forcing or coaxing all the students into their trails, suppose them to put into operation their system of hinting, and shrugging, and sneering, against all those who oppose them, and thus instil prejudice into susceptible minds; suppose them to hold out the hope of reward to obsequiousness, and the fear of ruin to the unruly; to use bland persuasion with the apathetic, and protestations of high-mindedness with the weak. Is there so much stern



virtue in man, so much independence, high-mindedness, and clear-sightedness, that for these men to obtain an election were impossible?

One more observation, and we, for the present, close. Are men *necessarily virtuous* who *keep their mouths shut*? If they can say nothing good of themselves, is it not the highest prudence for them to say nothing at all? "We believe they have never publicly noticed the propagators of those charges against them." To do things *publicly* is not in their line of business. It would sit awkwardly on them, besides, sir, they could gain nothing by it. Neither present reputation, nor future fame. Nothing would be elicited which would do to inscribe on their tomb stones. Rochefoucault says, "*La silence est la parti le plus sur de celui qui se defie de soi-meme.*" And they well know that silence is their strongest shield.\*

Having been assured that the article quoted at the commencement of the above letter, was not editorial, we ceased to address our essays to the conductor of the Star. But as the truth of our allegations was denied, we felt bound to enter into a full exposition of the grounds on which our assertions were made; these will be found embodied in the succeeding articles and notes. There will be some repetition, but such seems an unavoidable consequence of the periodical mode of publishing, and of the circumstances which called these essays forth.

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#### IV.

### PHYSICIANS' SOCIETY.

We publish, with pleasure, the following explanatory letter from a member of the Physicians' Society:

NEW-YORK, July 18, 1838.

"GENTLEMEN,—Permit me to call your attention for a few moments to an article in your last number, purporting to set forth the causes of the failure of the Liberal Ticket at the last Annual Election for officers. You state, that "Unfortunately for the Liberal Ticket, but fortunately, perhaps, for the success of free principles, a knowledge of the existence of a new secret society leaked out, just on the eve of the election. We received information concerning it from various quarters, and could do no other than notice it. The knowledge of that society was decisive of the election.

"We applaud the independent and firm stand which you have taken to promote free and open competition; and should have given you due credit for divining the cause of the failure of the free ticket, had the reason you assigned had an existence in fact.

\* See Appendix No. 5.

"There are, sir, several societies of physicians in our city, which assemble for mutual improvement; none of which, as far as I am acquainted, have appended to their constitution the term secret, excepting that of the Kappa Lambda. The Physicians' Society, to which I have the honor to belong, and for whom, I believe, your remarks were intended, is an assemblage of medical gentlemen, convened for the express purpose of mutual improvement in medical science—to discuss medical subjects—eventually to establish a medical periodical—to elevate the standard of medical ethics—to protect medical men from the hatred, malice, envy, and uncharitableness of exclusive monopolies—to express our motives openly, with a constitution setting forth these liberal views—and to publicly demonstrate by our acts, liberality to all our fellow-practitioners.

"We are neither ashamed nor afraid to avow these as our objects, and are determined to use every honorable means for their accomplishment. Neither flattery nor sycophancy on the one hand, nor threats of contumely on the other, shall cause us to relax in this most righteous undertaking.

Yours,

H."

Upon our correspondent's letter we would remark, that a society may be secret in *fact* without having appended to its constitution the *term* secret. We rejoice to learn, that the Physicians' Society is to be secret neither in name nor reality.

Of the nature and objects of this society, we have received ample and satisfactory explanations from its members; and we hasten to correct any erroneous impression which may have been made through us. We are assured that the society was intended to be open in all its acts, to hold public anniversary meetings and issue printed reports. True, the members kept quiet, until they might ascertain the probability of the society's permanency, of which there can be now no doubt, the number of members being about forty.

It was unfortunate, however, that the existence of the society was not made known by any act of its own, nor by the communicativeness of its members, but by individuals who had, in an almost accidental manner, become cognizant of its existence, and who asserted that they *knew* the society to be a secret one. If a *knowledge* of a new secret society was not decisive of the election, a *belief* in the existence of one certainly was. True it is, that other causes were operative, but leaving those causes out of view, the votes actually given, would have been *so* given, as to elect the president and several other officers.

The society has yet come out in no public way, but with the assurance and belief that it will do so, we extend to it the right hand of fellowship, and say to it "God speed." Let us take as our motto "*AUDACTER ET SINCERE*," and under that sign we *must* conquer.

## V.

## DETECTION OF THE CONSPIRACY.

The Kappa Lambda club long existed, without its existence being suspected. But as the irregularities on a river's surface, when the breeze sleeps, indicate hidden rocks, so did the outward movements and signs in professional matters give rise to suspicions in sagacious minds, that there were secretly operative causes, for things which could not be accounted for by what was known. Yet, though convinced that there was something wrong, *what* that something was, they knew not, and could obtain no clew until a circumstance occurred which we shall now relate. In doing this, we prefer to quote from the preamble to a report on "*The New-York Medical Secret Club*," published by authority of the New-York Medical Society, October 27, 1831. This report was written principally by Dr. P. C. Milledoller, the chairman of a committee appointed to investigate the matter, and signed by him and the rest of the committee, Dr. Felix Pascalis, Dr. A. D. Wilson, and Dr. H. B. Gram, and by the recording secretary, Dr. F. W. Walsh.

"For several years past," says the preamble, "suspicions have been awakened in the minds of many practitioners of medicine in this city, that an understanding existed among some of their brethren, by which the latter secured to themselves unfair advantages in their professional occupations. It would, perhaps, be invidious to mention the circumstances which so early gave rise to such a belief. Suffice it to say, that at this period, self respect prevented gentlemen from giving utterance to their thoughts, or language to their feelings.

"In process of time, however, partial success having rendered men unguarded, acts of a more open character occurred, strongly confirming the opinion that a secret combination of physicians, associated for the purpose of mutual benefit, did exist in the community, and was unduly interfering with the interests of the other members of the profession. It became, then, the subject of more frequent conversation, especially among those who had personally experienced its effects.

"Things continued in this state, when an article, headed 'Secret Medical Associations,' made its appearance in the New-York Medical and Physical Journal for October, 1829, containing an extract from a printed report of a trial for libel, occurring in Philadelphia, brought by George McClelland, M. D., against Francis Beattie, M. D. The editor remarks: 'We extract the following from the report &c., without any other comment than the expression of a sincere opinion that the medical atmosphere of New-York is untainted by the exhalations of any branch from such a parent stem.' The following is a part of the extract referred to:

"'This gentleman (Dr. Beattie,) is said to be a member, as are also Dr. Ritchie and Dr. Coates, of an association called the Kappa Lambda Society. Dr. Benjamin H. Coates, in the course of an examination, on his solemn affirmation, in a

cause recently tried, was interrogated as to some matters connected with the character of this association. He at first declined giving any information, but being reminded of the compulsion under which he stood, he let out these characteristic particulars, viz: that the association is a *secret* one, and that the members, on being admitted, *take an oath or solemn affirmation, binding them to mutual but secret aid and support.*"

"The North American Medical and Surgical Journal, edited and published in Philadelphia, feeling intensely for the comparative medical honor of our sister city, complains bitterly of the New-York editor, for publishing the above extract, and accuses him of duplicity in affecting ignorance of the fact, that *New-York contained a similar institution.*"

Thus were the profession of New-York apprised from abroad of the state of things at home.

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## VI.

### CONFIRMATION OF THE CONSPIRACY.

The profession having found the clew determined to unravel the mystery. Physicians were deeply agitated. Whenever two met, the secret club was the theme of conversation. The excitement was still more violent, when, on the 13th of October, 1830, there appeared a communication, in the American Lancet, signed "*Medicus*," in which the club was denounced, and to which was appended the following list, purporting to contain the names of some of its members: "JOHN WATTS, M. D., President of the College of Physicians and Surgeons, New York; JOHN AUGUSTINE SMITH, M. D., Professor of Anatomy, in do.; *John B. Beck*, M. D., Professor of Materia Medica, in do.; JOSEPH M. SMITH, M. D., Professor of Theory and Practice of Medicine, in do.; ALEXANDER H. STEVENS, M. D., Professor of Surgery, in do.; EDWARD DELAFIELD, M. D., Professor of Osbstetrics, in do. NICHOLL H. DERING, M. D.; *Edward G. Ludlow*, M. D.; SAMUEL W. MOORE, M. D.; ANSEL W. IVES, M. D.; JOHN C. CHEESEMAN, M. D.; GILBERT SMITH; MARTIN PAINE, M.D.; JOHN KEARNEY RODGERS, M.D.; RICHARD K. HOFFMAN, M. D.; D. W. KISSAM, M. D.; FRANCIS U. JOHNSTON, M. D.; most illustrious and magnanimous seventeen!"

It will be seen that included in this list are the names of *Drs. Beck* and *Ludlow*, who *were not* members of the secret club.

The opinion of these gentlemen concerning the Kappa Lambda, is indicated by the reparation they sought. Immediately commencing, as they did, an action for *libel* against the editors of the Lancet. Would men seek such reparation because they had been erroneously included in a list of the members

of an honest and honorable society? Oh no! Drs. Beck and Ludlow must have considered it equivalent to calling them dishonorable, knavish, or hypocritical, or by epithets equally damning. They may have been wrong in their supposition, but if so, it was an error for which we are not accountable.

From the report of this interesting trial, we extract the following decisive testimony from the evidence of Dr. Beck, given, of course, under oath.

“DR. BECK.—It was a matter of general conversation among the physicians of the city, that a society did exist. The opinion which witness holds of all secret societies, is, that persons who are united are supposed to have a community of interests, and when this union is a secret one, they may be supposed to be able to effect it with more certainty, as the persons likely to be obstacles to their views, are not likely to be aware of their designs. Believes that if such a society exists it ought to be broken up. Believes, in fact *knows*, that a secret society has been in existence.”

The trial ended by the jury refusing to bring in a verdict against the editors of the *Lancet*.\*

## VII.

### PUBLIC DENIAL OF THE CONSPIRACY.

The excitement in the medical world was kept up by the publication of a correspondence between our respected fellow citizen Dr. John Stearns, the avowed author of the article signed “*Medicus*,” and certain medical gentlemen whose names had been included among the “illustrious and magnanimous seventeen.” This correspondence commenced with the following letter:

NEW-YORK, JAN. 19, 1831.

“DR. JOHN STEARNS:—Sir, The statements contained under the signature of *Medicus*, published in the *American Lancet* and ascribed to you, representing the existence of an association of medical men in this city, formed for purposes dishonorable to themselves and injurious to the profession, are totally without foundation. Our names having been attached to that communication, we call upon you to retract the allegations therein contained.

ANSEL W. IVES,	ALEXANDER H. STEVENS,	FRANCIS U. JOHNSTON,
GILBERT SMITH,	J. KEARNEY RODGERS,	JOHN WATTS, JR.,
MARTYN PAINE,	DANIEL W. KISSAM, Jr.,	JOSEPH M. SMITH,
SAMUEL W. MOORE,	NICOLL H. DERING,	JOHN C. CHEESEMAN.”
RICHARD K. HOFFMAN,		

Deeming the intimation of the Philadelphian editor, and the circumstantial evidence gathered from various quarters in the daily rounds of practice, sufficiently conclusive of the existence of a secret society, Dr. Stearns with a

\* See Appendix No. 6.



laudable zeal for sound morality, and the honor of the profession, had written the letter before alluded to. It was mild in its tone and cautious in its statements, indicating a latent doubt, on the part of the writer, of the correctness of his conclusions.

When, therefore, Drs. Stevens, Johnston, Gilbert Smith and Ives, called upon him and stated that his charges were unfounded, and that there was no such society in existence, and when this was confirmed by the appendication of their own and other respectable signatures to a written disavowal, he was persuaded that his suspicions were wrong, and that he had done those gentlemen injustice. He, therefore, frankly retracted his assertions, in a written communication which they published, and of which the following is a copy :

NEW-YORK, JAN. 19, 1831.

"Whereas a publication, signed Medicus, has appeared in the American Lancet in relation to a secret association of medical gentlemen in this city, intimating, among other charges, that they are obligated to aid each other in their professional practice, to the exclusion of other physicians, and being now convinced that the injurious allegations contained therein, are not true, I with pleasure acknowledge that I have hitherto entertained an erroneous belief of the objects of the Association, and regret the effects of the unfavorable opinion I have expressed on that subject.

JOHN STEARNS."

Letters, characterised by a belligerent tone, afterwards passed between these gentlemen, but, as they have no very material bearing upon the subject before us, we refer the reader to the New-York Pilot of February 2, and February 9, 1831, where they may be found collected together. Upon this correspondence, when taken in connection with the developments recorded in the succeeding articles, we may safely trust, for a just commentary, to the impulsive feelings of every good and generous mind. But what must have been the feelings of Dr. Stearns, on finding all his anticipations realized, after being cajoled out of a retraction. Surely, he must have burst with indignation, but for the friendly aid of contempt.

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## VIII.

### DEVELOPMENT OF THE CONSPIRACY.

The publication of the disavowal before alluded to, was far from satisfying the profession at large, and, consequently, allusions were continually made to the subject, at the meetings of the Medical Society. To allay excitement by ascertaining the truth of the matter, the Society very properly determined upon a formal investigation. But they shall tell their own tale.



" The subject having become a *public scandal*, implicating the character of the profession, it was expected that an explanation would be offered by the members of the association, in order to remove suspicions unfavorable to themselves and their institution.

" An interval of several months elapsed, and meetings of the society had been held, and still no explanations were offered by the association to remove the doubt of some, the suspicions of others, and to allay the excitement pervading the profession.

" On the 20th of June, 1831, the President of the Medical Society was formally directed to convene a special meeting, for the consideration of the subject of the secret association.

" The names of the gentlemen making this call, are the following : Drs. Felix Pascalis, Samuel L. Mitchell, William Hamersley, David Hosack, Samuel Osborn, Fayette Cooper, John Stearns, John Neilson, Gerardus A. Cooper, Peter S. Townsend, and Dr. Anderson.

" A large and respectable meeting was accordingly held at the New-York Dispensary, ten days after it had been called. After its objects had been explained, one of the members introduced a resolution, accompanied with a preamble, containing charges against the association, and entering into the merits of the case. As it was foreseen, from the concealed character of the institution accused, that an angry discussion would ensue, without eliciting any satisfactory information, the gentleman introducing the subject, yielded to a motion to refer it to a committee of investigation. This mode of proceeding, dictated by a sense of propriety, was approved of, and adopted by a large majority. In accordance with the resolution, the committee, having been nominated by the President of the Society, made inquiries of several members of the association as to the nature of their institution. One of them asserted that *no information would be given* to the committee in their official capacity. Another made an appointment to meet two of the committee at his own house, and when called upon, manifested a disposition to treat the affair with so much *duplicity*, that they retired, after a few minutes conversation, in disgust. Others were applied to, who gave partial information. The name of the president of the association having been obtained, a note was addressed to him, requesting that the constitution and bye-laws of the New-York Kappa Lambda might be submitted to the inspection of the committee of investigation. To this, *no answer* was returned. At a meeting of the Medical Society, before the committee had finished their labors on this affair, one of the secret association undertook to read before the Society the *ex parte* communication referred to in the report. This attempt was opposed upon the ground of its being an informal mode of proceeding.

" It was contended, that if such a precedent should be established, no gentleman having a regard for his own character, would subject himself to be treated with disrespect, by consenting to serve on a responsible committee in future. The Society was, moreover, informed, that a respectful application had officially been made by the committee, to the secret association, and that no notice had been taken of it. To this last objection it was replied—that the President of the association had been out of town during an interval of several days, and did not

receive the note in time to return an answer; and in urging the acception of the communication, the society was given to understand, that had not this been the case, the request of the committee would have been complied with. The disingenuousness exhibited on the occasion, may be judged of, when it is stated that the committee, induced by the representations of the gentleman, afterwards renewed their request, and that it was, without assigning any reason, *promptly refused*."

It seems natural that men of honor should rejoice at such an opportunity of setting themselves right with their professional brethren, and of clearing from their characters injurious suspicions. But we see the members of the secret club practise trickery and duplicity, to conceal from scrutiny, their objects and proceedings.

It is a truism of mental philosophy, that actions presuppose motives. Thus when we see men *anxious to hide*, we instinctively infer not only that *there is something to be hidden*, but that there is an *adequate motive* for concealment. Now it is evident that these men could not refuse the required information without odium. Yet, rather than make a development, they chose to bear that odium. The conclusion naturally was, that of *two evils* they were choosing *the least*. In short, that the odium of concealment was less than *could be* the odium of development.

That a number of professional gentlemen should form themselves into a confederacy, and that for years they should mingle with their brethren publicly and privately, should meet them professionally and socially, at church, in the street, and the market place, and not one of them breathe to a non-confederate of the existence even of such a confederation—that their lips should be guarded as if the seal of death were upon them, must be sufficient evidence, to all unprejudiced minds, that the *motive* for concealment was *exceedingly great*.

The labors of the committee, however, were not fruitless, from a number of partial developments, they elicited the following startling particulars, notwithstanding the public assertion, before alluded to, that the allegations of "Medicus" were "totally without foundation."

1. That the society had been in existence about *twelve* years, and was independent of any other.
2. That the society is a *secret* one; the secrecy extending as well to the *existence* of the society, as to *all its proceedings*.
3. That it is an *exclusive* society, a *single black-ball* rejecting any person proposed, no explanation ever being made for black-balling a candidate.
4. That no qualifications of *private* or *professional character*, are recognized as requisite for admission. The feelings or fancy of the members regulating the votes.\*

\* See Appendix No. 6.

## IX.

## CHARACTER OF SECRET SOCIETIES.

That *union is strength* cannot be doubted; and it is equally true whether it be a union for good, or a union for evil. Of the former, the United States is an example, where a mighty nation is formed of an aggregation of republics, each of which, separately considered, is comparatively weak. Of the latter, the secret coalition of Thugs, in India, is an instance, where men are united throughout a great country, for purposes of assassination and plunder. It is worthy of remark, too, that unions for good are almost invariably *open*, as in the first of the above instances, and that unions for evil are almost invariably *secret*, as in the second. And, further, that open unions are generally for the *maintaining of rights*, and secret ones for the *obtaining of unfair advantages*. To the former, we should naturally look for whatever is honest, candid, and courageous; to the latter, for whatever is dishonest, double-dealing, and mean spirited.

In the medical profession there is, there can be, no *honorable* object which may not be openly avowed. Let "fair play" be observed in all things, and that degree of remuneration, honor, and consideration, will be obtained by each, to which his native power, education, industry, and character entitle him. Fair, open competition, is all that a high-minded man can desire.

For a number of men secretly to club together to obtain ends which others must attain, if they attain at all, without such aid, is an acknowledgement of inferiority. It is as though they said, "It would be very gratifying to us to be professors and hospital physicians, but then many are better entitled than we to be such; to obtain these offices, therefore, let us combine our forces, for though individually weak, we may be collectively strong, and by united efforts obtain that, to which, by individual merit, we are not entitled." In accordance with this, we find that such men as Hosack, Mitchell, Mott, McNeven, Francis, Stearns, and others, banded not in secret clans. They could stand alone, taking *Animo non astutia*, as their motto.

Secret societies are engines of tremendous power, when not only their proceedings but their existence is unknown. A comparatively small number of men, of ordinary talent even, thus bound to each other for the purpose of mutual aggrandisement, may be almost omnipotent. Their incentive is one of the most powerful in its operation of any which can stimulate the human mind, and they are still farther stimulated, by the fear of detection, to *work while the night lasts*. A society of men composed of such elements, striving

for such ends, and actuated by such motives, is exceedingly powerful, and its danger is equal to its power.

If its existence be known, but its objects and proceedings secret, then is it somewhat less dangerous indeed, but more destructive of peace. A host of passions are let loose; indignation, contempt, suspicion, hatred and revenge, take the field, and too often, alas! is all we hold dear destroyed or shattered in the conflict.

## X.

### SCIENTIFIC PRETENSIONS OF THE CONSPIRACY.

The plea of non-existence having proved abortive, the club pretended its object to be *the promotion of Medical Science*. This they have continued to maintain to the present time, and in their communication to the *Evening Star*, before copied, it formed the prominent point of defence. But not less absurd their hope of security from such a flimsy veil, than for the ostrich to hope security from the hunters, by thrusting its head into the crevice of a rock, while its huge body is exposed.

The greatest means for the advancement of science in modern times, is the press, and why? Clearly because when a new fact is discovered, or a new principle evolved, it wings the information to all quarters of the globe, and subjects it to the ponderings of ten thousand minds, which, thus excited to attention, discover other facts and still higher principles. Secrecy has long been divorced from science, and banished to the cell of the ignorant pretender. The notion of promoting science by secret clubs merits utter and unmitigated contempt.

If the Kappa Lambda be a scientific society, it must have one of two things in view. 1. To *advance* science. Or 2. To *spread* scientific information.

If the object of its members has been to *advance* science, they have either been successful or they have not. If they have, they participate in the joint stock of a world, and refuse their own paltry mite. Or they are professional quacks, who discover and employ *secret* remedies. If they have not been successful, then "some of the *most talented* members of the profession" have, for twenty years, been singularly unfortunate.

If their object has been to *spread* science, their plan indicates a degree of mental imbecility, of which they even were never suspected. What! put a candle under a bushel that it may give light to the whole house! Build a city in a mountain gap, that it may not be hid! Sink a monument into the

earth, that "the earliest rays of the morning may gild it, and parting day linger and play upon its summit!"

But no reasoning can show the presumptuous nature of this plea so forcibly as the following facts :

1. This club was in operation many years *unknown* to the other members of the profession.

2. The *acknowledged chiefs* of scientific men in New-York, such as *Dr. Samuel L. Mitchell* and the late *Dr. Hosack*, were as ignorant of its existence as the humblest member of the profession.

3. Though it has been in existence *near twenty years*, it has published no report, no annals, no account of newly discovered facts or principles. In short, as a society, it has done no public act. Nor has any member of that club published anything, save an occasional trifle, such as is found in the corners of all medical periodicals, if we except two or three unimportant pamphlets. If "men are known by their fruits," we think these statements conclusive of the disingenuousness of their plea.

Let us not be deceived, therefore ; this scientific pretension is a false sample spread on the surface, to induce the belief that all is right within. Having removed the false sample, be it our future task to search deeper, to scrutinize the true contents, and bring to light the hidden things of darkness.

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## XI.

### OBJECTS AND OPERATIONS OF THE CONSPIRACY.

SPECIFICATION OF MEDICAL RIGHTS.—"Honor and justice particularly forbid one medical practitioner's infringing upon the rights and privileges of another who is legally accredited, and whose character is not impeached by public opinion, or civil or medical authority; whether he be a native, or a stranger settled in the country. There is no difference between physicians, but such as results from their personal talents, medical acquirements, or their experience; and the public, from the services they receive, are the natural judges of these intellectual advantages. In all probability, every good physician would receive a merited share of patronage, were there not many who usurp a portion of it through *artful insinuations and slanders of others, or combinations against, or improper interferences with, the more worthy practitioner.*"—*Medical Ethics of New York*, 13th Section.

Let us suppose a city to contain various medical institutions, official stations in which, are very desirable, inasmuch as they lead to practice and con-



fer reputation. Should thirty gentlemen, reckless of the admirable principle and spirit of the above extract, bind themselves, by oaths or affirmations, to mutual agrandizement; what would be their course? On a vacancy occurring, they would immediately meet and determine which of their confederates should be put into the vacant office. Having determined upon this, they would draw up a strong recommendation of their brother-in-selfishness, and twenty-nine names would at once be appended. They would then go among their unsuspecting professional brethren, and as they would have the advantage of promptness, and the powerful stimulus of inordinate selfishness, each looking for the like, in turn, their chance of success would be very great. Men gather where there is a crowd, and twenty-nine names affixed to a document promptly offered for signature, would be almost sure to attract to them the name of every member of the profession who had no favorite candidate of his own, and no special dislike to the one proposed.

Let the influence of some particular individual be needed; how strong the probability of obtaining it, even though the individual applied to, should be at first reluctant. For example: Let the influence of L. be required for A., the candidate. One of the club applies to obtain it, but L. sees no good reason for elevating A. to the office; he thinks there are more fit and worthy men. Another member of the secret club applies, and tells him that "A. is just the man;" a third tells him that "he has an inadequate opinion of A.;" a fourth "that no man will fill the office better," a fifth "that no one will fill it so well." Another, and still others succeed, till construing this into a universal recommendation, he begins to doubt the accuracy of his previous impressions, and finally yields to their importunities. They elect their member, and, having thus inserted the point of their wedge, it would be a hard case if they could not drive it home.

Let us turn from supposition to fact, and see whether history does not prove, what sagacity might anticipate.

From the report of the Medical Society it appears, that of *eight* attending physicians and surgeons, of the New-York Hospital, *seven* were members of the secret club; the eighth, Dr. Mott, who was not a member, had been appointed before the club's formation.

Of the *five* consulting physicians of the New-York Dispensary, *four* were members of the secret club.

Of the *nine* physicians of the lying-in establishment, *all* except two were members of the secret club, and those two, Drs. Bailies and Wilkes, filled subordinate situations.

The secret club had in possession, at one time, *four professorships*, and the *presidency* of the Medical College.



Of the trustees of the Medical College, *two-thirds* were members of the secret club.

To these startling facts we shall add no commentary, except, that things remain yet, in nearly their old condition.

## XII.

### OPERATIONS OF THE CONSPIRACY.

The thirty conspirators before alluded to, might call each other only in consultation, yet accept all they could from those beyond the magic circle. Should a patient propose a non-confederate, what then? "He is rather young." "I am unacquainted with the gentleman," "He is quite a literary character, but, as a practical man, why —." here follows a shake of the head; "Don't you think Dr. C. would be a much better choice?" "Dr. S. lives much nearer;" in short, there is always some excuse at hand for the accomplishment of their purpose. No fancy sketches are these; we could name the time and place of making such objections, by members of the secret club. This practice, while it is profitable to the parties themselves and particularly *safe*, inasmuch as it keeps their treatment *locked up* from the profession at large, is in direct violation of every principle of honor and honesty. Dr. Rush made it a point of conscience, to meet men in consultation, when named by the patient, even if they were such as had injured and insulted him. "For," said he, "whatever opinion I may have of the man and the physician, *I might as well pick his pocket*, as deprive him of the fee to which his reputation or influence entitle him."

It would be demonstrative of the truth of all our positions, to detail circumstances which have come under our observation. Such a course, however, would protract the subject inconveniently; we shall, therefore, merely give, as an example, an occurrence of last winter.

A medical student, of about twenty-six years of age, and of great industry, was in the office of a professor of the college, who is a member of the Kappa Lambda club. This professor has, generally, more students than any other physician in the city, notwithstanding that in his office no treatment can ever be witnessed. The gentleman, above referred to, was about to come up for graduation in the spring, and was anxious for some practical knowledge; accordingly, without the slightest suspicion that his conduct would give offence, he applied to an eminent surgeon, *not a member of the Kappa Lambda Club*, for permission to attend his office an hour or two in the afternoon to see practice, and in the evening for surgical examination. Arrange-

ments were accordingly made, and a fortnight's attendance was the result, during which time, the student, as he himself affirmed, saw more practice, than by near three years attendance at the other office.

But the professor heard of it, and called the gentleman to account, who respectfully stated his reasons, and remarked, that the benefit he was seeking would not interfere with his attendance on the professor. But he was told, that should he continue in THAT surgeon's office, he could not come up for examination at the college with the professor's endorsement, nor as his student. The gentleman pleaded, but in vain; he then felt disposed to resent the insult, but fearing that he might lose the diploma, if he continued contumacious, together with the opportunity of being appointed to the hospital, he yielded. The surgeon was deprived of a temporary pupil, and the student of instruction, which he felt would have been of great service to him, in the practice of his profession; nor must we leave out of view the moral degradation, which he, a man acting for himself in the world, suffered from the compulsion. However, he obtained his diploma in the spring, and was rewarded for his obsequiousness, by an early appointment to the hospital.\*

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### XIII.

#### ETHICS OF THE CONSPIRACY.

It is the practice of the unrighteous and narrow-minded to judge of actions by events, and of character by external circumstances. A St. John, clothed in "his raiment of camel's hair, with a leathern girdle about his loins," would be shunned with disdain. He who spake as never man spake, if dressed in humble habiliments, and announced as "the carpenter's son," would be greeted with the exclamation, "what does this babbler say?" To them, the character of an Alfred, when reduced to poverty, and soothing his ruthless foes with the harmonies of his minstrel strain, would have no shadow nor token of greatness. And the blind Belisarius, groping and begging his way through countries in which he had formerly been hailed with shouts of triumph, would be the object of utter scorn and derision. Such men see no beauty in that virtue, which blooms despite the wintry blasts of adversity—nothing admirable in that fidelity to principle, which, amid the lures of ambition and the jeers of a world, remains

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"Unmoved,  
Unshaken, unseduced, unterrified."

\* See Appendix No. 7.

Of such characters are the members of the secret club possessed, as they themselves have publicly announced, in their late Memorial to the Common Council, relative to the Bellevue Hospital.

The history of the proposition of "reform," which they made in that memorial, would form an interesting chapter. The means used to procure support—the coaxing used towards some—the promises of official station to others—the pretended love of the profession, and anxiety for the students and young practitioners, at the time that their mouths were watering for the "spoils," which, indeed, they apportioned out, by anticipation, in the most satisfactory manner. The prime movers in memorialising, were, of course to be the chief dignitaries, and their expectant dependents the subordinates. So complete were the arrangements, that the names of the officials were quite current, before the Common Council had made any report upon the subject. We are far from thinking the present medical establishment at the Bellevue Hospital, the best which can be devised; but we rejoice that the self-aggrandising scheme of the memorialists, was crushed under the heel of an indignant profession.

But we would refer, particularly, to the disgraceful disparagement, of the younger members of the profession, and of "such practitioners of more advanced age as have not succeeded in obtaining practice"—"*those members of the profession who have been least successful, and, as* MUST NECESSARILY BE INFERRED, LEAST DESERVING OF SUCCESS"—a maxim, the absurdity of which can only be equalled, by the matchless impudence of its asserters.

"Success, the test of desert!" True it is, indeed, that success often wins the admiration of the world, independent of moral considerations; that the successful plotter, villain or debauchee, is often greeted with all respect and courtesy. And true, alas! it is, that he who pursues, undeviatingly, the path of honor and virtue, who makes no false pretensions, who bows not down to the gold of the rich man's coffers, who flatters not fools and puppies for their support, who hesitates not to call trickery, duplicity, or villany by their right names, is often exposed to insult, contumely, and reproach: but that the one *deserves* admiration and respect; and, that the other *deserves* insult, contumely, and reproach; is a doctrine which none but members of the secret club could have discovered.

Ruled by this principle, we need only inquire into the *event* of a course of conduct, in order to ascertain the *merit of the means*. Let us see how easily and naturally the rule will work.

Philip of Macedon fomented quarrels among the states of Greece, urged them into mad wars and gave assistance to the weak that he might enfeeble the strong. He finally trampled upon the liberties of all, and became the arbiter of all. Such was his object; he was successful; therefore he *deserved*

success. Cæsar, through bloodshed, devastation and treason, obtained the imperial diadem; that was the object of his ambition; he was successful; therefore, he deserved success. Mahommed, through blood, by cruelty, imposture, and blasphemous daring, waded to empire; he obtained his object, therefore he deserved success. A number of men in the city of New-York, by double dealing, secret, midnight machinations, and ruthless selfishness, have secured to themselves almost all the honors, and the chief emoluments of the medical profession; *that was their object; they have been successful; therefore they have deserved success*; nothing can be more obvious!

But let us still further illustrate this admirable principle. Brutus attempted to restore the liberties of his country; he was unsuccessful. Rienzi strove to raise the character and condition of his fellow citizens; he was murdered by them. Sydney died on the scaffold for his efforts in the cause of freedom. For truth's sake, ten thousand times ten thousand have been immolated by tyranny and bigotry. We may point to modern Poland and her successful struggles—to her Kosciusko and his compatriots' efforts to break their country's chains. But no matter, the degree of their success is indicative of their deserts, they failed or perished and they *deserved* to fail or perish. So in our city, there are men who have pursued a high-minded, honorable course, who have disdained to rise by injuring their brethren—who have scorned to enter into combinations for mutual and unfair aggrandisement; their meed of remuneration has not been as great as that of the less scrupulous; they have been excluded too from official station; in short, "*they have been the least successful, and, as must necessarily be inferred, the least deserving of success.*"

Let it be understood, then, that the grand principle of Kappa Lambda ethics, the very foundation stone of the whole superstructure is, that "SUCCESS IS THE CRITERION OF MERIT."

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#### XIV.

### PROSPECTS OF THE CONSPIRACY.

In this place we intended to bring forward 'a cloud of witnesses,' to sustain our views concerning secret societies in general, and the Kappa Lambda in particular; but so abhorrent to our feelings has the subject become, that we shall shake it from our hands in the present article; and we now return to it, for the last time, with the same shudder of disgust with which a young student returns to the dissection of a half putrid body.

Instead, therefore, of bringing a cloud of witnesses, we shall content ourselves with quoting from one document only, the latest that has appeared,

being a report adopted at a meeting of medical gentlemen, held at the grand jury room on the 2d of July, 1838, and signed by *A. Sidney Doane*, M. D., Chairman, and *A. D. Wilson*, M. D., Secretary.

"It is within the recollection of all," says this document, "that the disclosures of a witness before a court at Philadelphia, a few years since, brought to light the existence, in the bosom of the profession, of a secret medical association, the members of which, for years, had mingled unrecognized with their uninitiated brethren.

"Investigation, thus aroused, exposed a similar association in this city, whose operations had extended through eight or ten years—in darkness. Further examination revealed the startling facts, that nearly every public place of professional honor or profit was filled by members of this association, and that its constitution virtually bound its members to unite their efforts in promoting the advancement of each respectively, to the exclusion of all beyond its bounds.

"This association still exists among us; and though its ranks have been deserted by some whose eyes were open to the perversion of which even *legitimate* principles were susceptible, and though others remain who are too high-minded, *knowingly*, to act as the instruments of the unworthy, yet, who is there, only a few years in the ranks of the profession, standing aloof from this association, who has not directly or indirectly felt its baneful influence? Wherever this influence is in force, its aims are not to be mistaken—whether exerted in secret, systematically securing public honors and private emolument, or in public, (as in the late memorial to the Common Council) discountenancing 'young men,' who it is alleged, '*have their profession to learn*,' and disparaging 'such practitioners of more advanced age as have not succeeded in obtaining practice'—'those members of the profession,' it is repeated, '*who have been least successful, and, as must necessarily be inferred, least deserving of success*'—whether silently weaving its webs, for the sick and the dying in the private recesses of professional routine, or openly upholding in the Medical Society the arbitrary misrule, the high-handed tyranny of the present administration—everywhere, its course is marked by the *spirit of self aggrandizement*—everywhere the rights of the *many* are forgotten for the claims of the *few*, who, confident of their power, and regardless of the means by which it has been attained, unblushingly proclaim to the world their success as a proof of their merit."

And shall the Kappa Lambda continue its domination? We believe not. The brand of infamy now rests upon it, and it stinks in the nostrils of the honorable. Hard, indeed, it is, to clean out such an Augean stable. Still we answer, in the words of the above quoted memorial,

"There is a redeeming spirit abroad—a spirit which will no longer brook arrogant pretensions, supported by secret conspiracy against the claims of the profession at large; a spirit which, compelled to draw the sword, has thrown away



the scabbard, and will never rest until the rights of every legal practitioner be acknowledged, and the honors and emoluments of the profession be no longer prostituted to reward political intrigue and more debasing sycophancy."

To the unreflecting it may seem incredible that a number of men should be found, in an educated and reputable profession, mean enough to sully their fame and consciences, by such proceedings as we have described; or that, having done so, they should, after detection, be tolerated for a moment by any of their professional brethren. But this wonder ceases when we contemplate actions by the light of experience. We shall then find that there is nothing very extraordinary in men of education even, either acting wickedly, or supporting those who do so.

When wrong doing is successful, its perpetrators take high place in society; they become surrounded by the insignia of wealth and respectability—their air of aristocratic elevation abashes the vulgar minded, and renders villainy almost intangible. The successful scoundrel bares his brow and walks erect in the face of day, exchanging salutations with the great; while the unsuccessful one, whose failure is owing, perhaps, to the qualms of an incompletely seared conscience, is hooted from society with every epithet of contumely and reproach.

Some men have a blind veneration for everything which is above them. Regardless of considerations of worthiness, they would bow down before a Nero or a Caligula as readily as before an Adrian or an Alfred.

Some object to tyranny because they themselves are not the tyrants. Such are governed by absorbing selfishness; and if their ends may be better attained by fawning, than denunciation, they hesitate not to practise it; determining to compensate by future oppression, for present degradation—a class which gives force to the misanthropic sarcasm.

" In every clime and era man is man—  
The *spaniel* if he *must*, the *tiger* if he *can*."

There is a somewhat numerous class, consisting of such as have not much ambition to be leaders, but who may be whistled into the trail of any man or class of men that offers an adequate consideration. Lank and hungry puppies, they may be led to the kennel and the chain by a continually receding bait—a bait which, when they are bound, is often withheld.

We find a good but timid sort of people, who would rather do right than wrong, when equally convenient. They wish to be peaceful, however, and on good terms with all men, and to be so, they will sacrifice even principle itself.

Others, and these constitute, generally, the founders of secret conspiracies and treasonable juntos, are of so base and polluted a *mind*, that they have an



instinctive fondness for whatever is vile, dishonorable, and corrupt, and would rather attain even honest ends, by tortuous, intriguing, dirty means, than in a fair, open, and manly manner; goose-like, they leave the clear and pebbled brook, or the glassy lake, to wade in the murky and fetid puddle.

The existence of these classes, renders the origin and continued support of such a society as we have described, anything but incredible, and offers strong motives to the wise, good, and bold, for fourfold exertion. Let the character of the association be placed in bold relief, that its odiousness may be manifest. Let the boldness of the brave encourage the honorable but timid. Let the selfish be shown that it is not their interest to cling to a withering tree, which is already stretching out its decaying arms for help. Let the true motives of the sycophant be proclaimed and reiterated. Finally, let not merely evanescent efforts be made, and if unsuccessful, the arms be folded in despair; be the efforts not only vigorous but unrelaxing, till the Augean stable be cleansed, and the hydra strangled.

We now take leave, for the present, of the hated theme, believing that the days of the Kappa Lambda are numbered, and that it is about to meet the fate of all things which creep upon the face of the earth. A spirit is aroused which cannot be satisfied till its fate is sealed. We advise it to die as soon and as decently as possible, and the most decent death, of which it is susceptible, is *felo de se*; imitating in this, as in so many other instances, the reptile which is said to pierce its breast with its own forked tongue, when escape is impossible. The next annual meeting of the Medical Society would, doubtless, vote a monument to its memory, damning it to everlasting fame. And we, ourselves, here furnish an epitaph:

Pause, traveller! and read the tale  
Which I relate and yet bewail:  
Here lies the Kappa Lambda wight,  
Begot by Selfishness on Night.  
It was a thing of craft and guile,  
Which bowed, and smiled, and wronged the while.  
Through dark and sinuous paths, by stealth,  
It crawled to office, gathered wealth.  
But sorely foiled its strife to trace  
Its name, 'midst those of noble race;  
It sought for *fame* and found but—*place*!  
Exposed, at length, to truth's pure ray,  
It raved, writhed, withered, passed away,  
And caused a laughing holiday!  
But hark! for evermore doth come,  
A voice of warning from the tomb.

" Does love of fame thy soul inspire,  
To soar above the vulgar throng,  
Like Cotopaxi's peak of fire,  
The lesser Andine cliffs among?

" Ponder my moral, and be wise  
To learn betimes from other's wo,  
That thou can'st never, never rise,  
By sinking low.

" Does love of wealth or lust of place  
Allure to deeds of infamy?  
Pause! buy not baubles with disgrace--  
*Remember me!*"

## APPENDIX.

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### No. 1.

Many inquiries have been made concerning the meaning of the words *Kappa Lambda*. Of this we can give no satisfactory explanation. It is known, of course, that they are the names of two Greek letters, K and L, but we know not of what they are significant. We may remark, however, that many clans, banditti and unlawful clubs have ventured to veil their true character in a cabalistic name, and it may be that these letters are the initials of two words expressive of the true nature of the society. If so, it is more than probable that *Kappa* is the initial of an adjective, and *Lambda* of a noun, but of what adjective and of what noun we know not. If we recollect rightly,

KABAISAS	means	<i>insatiable.</i>
KAKEGOROS	"	<i>abusive.</i>
KAKOTHELES	"	<i>malevolent.</i>
KAKOKERDES	"	<i>addicted to illicit gain.</i>

Here we have epithets seemingly appropriate—then we have the noun:

LATHRODAKNES meaning *one who bites unawares or treacherously.*

But whether this noun, preceded by one of the above epithets, constitutes the true name of the society, we leave the learned clan to determine.

### No. 2.

Such is the low estimation in which our Medical School is held, that to this, the first city of the Union, fewer students resort than to many mere villages. During the present session, seventy or eighty are in attendance. In Philadelphia, *seven hundred*.

For proof of our assertions, concerning the Hospital, we refer to the observation of those who have been in the habit of attending that institution, to the columns of the *Weekly Whig*, and to those of the *New Era* for 1836 and 1837. Of the reports which appeared in the last mentioned paper, we would remark, that though they indicate a somewhat virulent spirit, and rather too much haste to condemn, we know the facts to be substantially correct.

### No. 3.

Among the letters, with which we have been honored on this subject, is one from a professional gentleman of the first rank, and who has practised in this city for more than forty years. We lay before our readers the following extract:

"I have read with much gratification your remarks on the K. L. Society. As far as they go, they are pertinent and conclusive, and must produce conviction. They might, however, be much extended and enlarged. If the public were correctly informed of all the facts, and the names of all the members, the society must rapidly approach dissolution. The catalogue of evils which they have inflicted on the community is tremendous. I have for many years vigilantly watched the progress of the society, its effects, and destructive tendency. I have no doubt, that it might be effectually suppressed by indictment. I consider it as the most

prominent cause of the depressed condition of the medical college, of the degraded state of the profession in this city, of most of the schisms and animosities that have divided the faculty for several years, and of the quackery which has so generally increased *pari passu* with the influence and growth of the society. How these effects have been produced might be easily and satisfactorily explained."

## No. 4.

The following is a copy of the Anti-Kappa-Lambda ticket:

- For President, JOHN W. FRANCIS, M. D.
- " Vice-President, JOHN STEARNS, M. D.
- " Treasurer, GALEN CARTER, M. D.
- " Delegate, SAMUEL R. CHILDS, M. D.
- " Corresponding Secretary, ANDREW HAMMERSLEY, M. D.
- " Recording do. WILLIAM TURNER, M. D.
- " Librarian, WILLIAM WILSON, M. D.

*For Censors.*

- GUNNING S. BEDFORD, M. D.
- R. H. MC CLAY, M. D.
- A. T. HUNTER, M. D.
- GEORGE WILKES, M. D.
- HENRY G. DUNNEL, M. D.

## No. 5.

The following letter appeared in the Evening Star shortly after the election. It was written by one whose name is well and honorably known throughout the United States:

" TO THE EDITORS OF THE EVENING STAR:

" GENTLEMEN—Permit me, as one of those members of the medical profession, who are content to rely for success in their career, upon merit alone, unaided by any secret combination against the rights and interests of their professional brethren, to make a few remarks in reference to an article which the Weekly Whig of Saturday, purports to have copied from a late Evening Star.

" The meeting of the Medical Society, on Monday last a week, was the largest anniversary meeting ever held in this city.

" The opposition to the Kappa Lambda and College party rallied in their might, because during the past year, the last named party have often attempted to deprive medical gentlemen of their lawful rights, free discussion, and the liberty of speech. Added to this, in a memorial addressed to the Common Council, and printed among the archives of the city, as document 108, the gentlemen who fill the situations of physicians and surgeons to the New-York Hospital, and professors in the Medical College, (places which are conferred on the most *influential*, not on the most *talented* as the records of medical science will fully prove) these men in office have not hesitated to stigmatise young men as "*having their professions to learn*," and those of the profession who have been least successful in obtaining medical practice, as "*least deserving of success*." Now in no profession does success depend so much upon a genteel address, tact, family influence, and a happy opportunity, as in the medical profession. In other pursuits, talent and learning carry weight with them, and entitle their possessors to honor and distinction; but any one acquainted with the mode in which appointments to hospitals and colleges are made *here*, must admit that this is by no means true in medicine. Is it not then presumptuous in gentlemen, who occupy these places of honor and profit, to attempt by a memorial addressed to the city councils, to bring their professional brethren into disrepute? I know that some of the professors feeling the awkwardness of their position, have disclaimed any intention of wounding the feelings of the young men, &c., &c., but in vain. The accusation is public, and demands a public apology.

"These, gentlemen, are a few reasons for the large meeting of the medical society. You allude to what you are pleased to call a *private* circular. The circular was an address to the members of the Medical Society, adopted at a meeting held with open doors at the Court of Sessions; six hundred copies of it were printed for the Medical Society, and one was sent to each member. You will see that the name of the Kappa Lambda Society does not appear in it; the remarks in the address must be singularly apposite to that Society, otherwise, the gentlemen composing it would not so readily have made the application. This address was not published in the papers, because the "Free Competition" party do not approve of bringing their griefs before the public, except in self defence. You, however, would do but an act of justice, by publishing it. Your remarks close by saying that the whole Kappa Lambda ticket was triumphantly elected. The triumph was this: one hundred and ninety-seven votes were given, and ninety-nine were necessary for, choice. Dr. Johnston, the President elect, had one hundred and one, being *two* majority. How was this majority obtained? By mustering the dominant party at the polls precisely at the time appointed, voting down a resolution to keep the polls open for two hours; dispensing with the report of the treasurer—a state law, to the contrary notwithstanding—and then proceeding directly to ballot. If the Kappa Lambda gentlemen call this a triumph, they are welcome to it. Augustus."

#### No. 6.

A list of near thirty members may be found, on referring to the report of the Medical Society, so often alluded to. Where spoils have to be divided the fewer the recipients the greater the share of each, acting upon this principle, as few additions as possible have been made to the number of conspirators. Several new members have, however, been added, that the clan might be enabled to retain its grasp. These junior members, consist generally of such as have too much self-esteem to submit quietly to tyranny, and too little conscience to prevent them from becoming tyrants.

#### No. 7.

As illustrations of the text, we might fill a large volume with anecdotes. We will, however, relate but two, these we select as the occurrences have transpired since the publication of our articles in the Whig, and because the gentlemen attempted to be injured, are two of our most talented physicians, in the prime of manhood, one of them is favorably known as an author, both in this country and Europe, and the other one has held a professorship in a Medical College.

A gentleman came to this city to have an operation performed on his eye. He applied to Dr. T. for advice, and mentioned that he had heard of Dr. D. as a good operator. Dr. T. confirmed the report, and Dr. D. was applied to. The two gentlemen met each other in consultation, several times. Shortly afterwards, they had each a patient in the same house. Dr. D. of the K. L. hearing that Dr. T. was attending the lady of the other family, remarked to his patient that he supposed him to be a very young and inexperienced man, as he had never heard of him before.

In the other case, Dr. C. of the K. L. was attending a child, and the family requested that Dr. B. should be called in consultation. "I should think it better" was the reply "to call in some *experienced* gentleman, suppose you send for Dr. G. S." (a member of the K. L.) "It would be much better."

In reference to the effect of such combinations as we are exposing, on the important medical act of consultation, we copy the following appropriate remarks from the report of the committee of the Medical Society appointed to investigate the subject of the secret Medical Association:

"The committee are of opinion that the public good is very materially interfered with, by the existence of *secret, exclusive, and mutual benefit* medical clubs in the community. Not to mention the *useless consultations* and the *unnecessary numbers* invited to them, both of which effects the disposition of the members of these clubs, to oblige and patronise each other, is calculated to produce, it may often happen that the patients who fall into their hands, may be reduced to such an extremity

as to render a consultation necessary. If your committee understand the nature of a consultation, it is not intended to be merely the assembling together of men, who see eye to eye, in order to avoid responsibility, and to increase the expenses of medical attendance, but would rather judge that their utility in reference to patients, mainly depends upon a free interchange of the opinions of men of skill, and independent minds, who would not be so much impressed with a deference for each other, or their own interest, as to forget the most important concern, the patient's safety. Under other circumstances, a consultation is a mere farce, if nothing worse.

"In cases requiring surgical operations the evils of these associations may be seriously felt. It often happens that gentlemen of the profession are asked to recommend a surgeon to decide upon the propriety of an operation, and to perform it if necessary. When we learn that a gentleman\* of our city, celebrated at home and abroad, for his correct judgment in surgery, for the boldness and safety of his operations, does not belong to the secret association of New-York, how can we account for the circumstance, unless by supposing that he is either not *properly appreciated* by the members, or, else, that *envy* at his distinguished reputation has excluded him? In either case, there is reason to fear that in those important cases requiring such a man, he may be set aside, and a man of rashness, or otherwise mentally or physically deficient, be substituted. Great damage might thus happen to such as depend upon the impartiality of a prejudiced or unconscientious medical adviser, for an unbiassed recommendation."

The candidate for license, binds himself "that in all cases of jeopardy or doubt, he will call in the best advice," the conspirator adds "which can be found in the secret club."

\* Dr. Mott.

